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ARTICLES:

(1) Editorial: Buy American clause; Resist temptation of protectionism

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)
February 5, 2009

Amid the global recession, protectionist moves, such as hikes in import tariffs and subsidies for domestic industries, are emerging in many countries. At such a time, legislation that could shut out imported goods from public works is under deliberation in the U.S., the champion of the postwar free trade system.

The Buy American clause in question has been incorporated into a stimulus bill that includes measures worth more than 800 billion dollars or approximately 72 trillion yen, based revisions made by legislators. The legislation mandates the use of U.S.-made steel for public works. It cleared the House of Representatives last week. The Democratic Party, the ruling party led by President Obama, has taken a leading part in passing the bill. The Senate is now deliberating the bill that also subjects manufactured goods in general to the clause.

Criticism of the clause is mounting in many countries. The European Commission (EC) has warned that it would not overlook the clause if the bill is enacted as is. Japan's Economy, Trade and Industry

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Minister Nikai at an informal cabinet ministerial meeting held last weekend under the World Trade Organization (WTO) urged the U.S. to take a second look at the bill, saying, "The bill is totally contrary to the purport of the declaration by leaders issued at the financial summit last November, in which they pledged to prevent protectionism."

Referring to the Buy American clause, President Obama during a TV interview this week said, "It is completely wrong to send a message at a time when trade is in a slump all over the world that the U.S. is only thinking about its national interests instead of global trade. It is necessary to ensure that the U.S. does not trigger a trade war." He is correct.

However, if the bill clears Congress with the clause remaining intact, after coordination between the House of Representatives and the Senate, President Obama would find himself in a difficult situation. If he exercises the veto over the bill, fiscal action and tax cuts to stimulate the economy would be delayed. He probably wants to avoid confronting Congress too hastily.

However, Mr. Obama was elected, carrying the weight of expectations for the world. We want Mr. Obama to show a stance of fighting off protectionism by working to persuade the Congress. The Senate should reconsider its stance and delete the clause from the bill.

The U.S. accelerated the protectionist trend in the global economy, by establishing the Buy American Act in 1933 during the Great Depression. As a result, the Great Depression became protracted and this led to world war. This history clearly indicates that the U.S. act was wrong.

U.S. industry is mostly against the Buy American clause. That is because there is fear that if the U.S. shuts out foreign products, other countries would shut out U.S. products likewise. Should that occur, U.S. companies exporting goods and services would suffer a blow.

The vicious spiral of retaliation would further shrink global trade. Economies of all countries would go down together.

Protectionism will become a main agenda item at the second financial summit to be held in April. President Obama should eliminate protectionism on the domestic front so that he can call on leaders

participating in the summit to firmly maintain free trade. The U.S., where the economic crisis started, spreading a recession throughout the world, is responsible for acting that way.

(2) Editorial: Trade protectionism unforgivable

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)
February 5, 2009

If the U.S. tilts toward trade protectionism amid the ongoing global recession, it would have an adverse effect on the recovery of its economy. We must not forget the lesson that trade protectionism led to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

U.S. President Obama is urged to contain trade protectionism with strong resolve.

The House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress in late January

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adopted a stimulus bill that incorporates measures worth more than 800 billion dollars. The legislation includes a Buy American clause.

The clause mandates the government to prioritize the purchase of U.S.-made steel for public works for constructing or repairing roads and bridges it sponsors.

The housing and auto markets have cooled off due to the worsening economy, rapidly hurting corporate earnings. The Buy American clause is probably intended to jack up the industry through the preferential use of U.S. steel. The legislation, on which the Senate will shortly hold a vote, subjects manufactured goods in general to the Buy American clause. The clause is intended to shut out foreign goods. It is fair to say that it is obviously a protectionist clause.

The U.S. enacted the Buy American Act when it was hit by the Great Depression. The opposition put up by many countries brought about bloc economies. As a result, trade shrank, escalating the crisis. Reflecting on what happened, the world has come to attach importance to free trade since the end of the World War II. Under such circumstance, the U.S. in the government procurement agreement under the World Trade Organization pledged to subscribe to a trade policy that does not discriminate between domestic and foreign products, and not to apply the Buy American Act.

There is a strong possibility of the Buy American clause being in violation of this agreement. It is also in breach of the agreement reached at the financial summit in November last year that there should be no fresh trade barriers set for the next year.

It is only natural that Japan and European countries expressed concern about the U.S. policy. The American Chamber of Commerce is also opposing the Buy American clause.

President Obama on February 3 stated, "We should prevent anything that could trigger a trade war from being incorporated into the legislation." He apparently made that statement with the criticism coming from many countries in mind.

The legislation will come into effect, once the president signs it, after its passage in the Senate, followed by coordination with the House of Representatives. The president should persuade Congress to eliminate the controversial clause. Protectionist moves as can be seen in hikes in tariffs on autos by Russia and steel by India have continued since last fall, when the financial crisis spread.

There is great fear that if protectionist pressure mounts in the U.S., such a move would be accelerated. The global recession could become protracted.

The approach of the U.S. administration, which has been promoting free trade, is now facing its first test.

(3) U.S. force realignment: Blocks must not be pulled down

Yoichi Kato, Washington

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James Shinn, who was assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific security affairs in the Bush administration until last fall, responded to an Asahi Shimbun interview for the first time since he left his Pentagon post. In the interview, Shinn talked about the Japan-U.S. alliance and other issues. The following are the main exchanges in the interview.

-- How do you evaluate the former Bush administration?

Shinn: We would engage China (in the international community), strengthen our alliance with Japan and South Korea, push for North Korea's denuclearization, and maintain stability in Southeast Asia. These were our policy goals. Things went fairly well, except for North Korea.

-- Were you unable to stop North Korea's nuclear testing?

Shinn: Even if the U.S. government leader is a genius or a fool, North Korea would have carried out its nuclear test. Even if we want to affect their decision-making process, we cannot always affect the result.

-- What do you think about the present state of Japan-U.S. relations?

Shinn: I think the relationship is like building blocks. Using this metaphor, I explained this to someone who is critical of the talks over the U.S. force realignment. The realignment talks created a beautiful pile of blocks. However, in Japan as well as in the United States, there are some people who are trying to take out one of the blocks because they want to change the pile a little. They may have plausible reasons. But if everybody takes a block out in that way, the pile of blocks will topple down at some point, and we will have to do the talks over again from scratch. Although they know everybody will be troubled, they will not stop arguing.

-- Okinawa is calling for moving the Futenma replacement facility out to sea.

Shinn: That means taking out one of the building blocks. The pile will probably collapse.

-- What about the Obama administration's Asia policy and its Japan-U.S. alliance policy?

Shinn: Generally speaking, the Obama administration's policies are the same. So I think there will not be so much difference in its actual policies. Japan and the United States have shared interests.

-- How about assistance to Afghanistan?

Shinn: Just like the former administration, I think the Obama administration hopes Japan will share the responsibility with other international community members for what is happening in Afghanistan. Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean is a very limited contribution. It's regrettable that Japan cannot do anything more. Among the Group of Seven (G-7) nations, Japan is the only country that has not sent troops to Afghanistan. I think it's extremely natural for Japan to carry that out. Japan has the Self-Defense Forces, which is wonderful. Its capability is enough. All the arguments in Japan are related to domestic politics. I'd like to say it's not easy for any country to send troops, if there

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are casualties in particular. This is not the United States' war. This is the United Nations' war, which is recognized by the U.N.

Security Council. Japan is trying to become a permanent member of the Security Council, but I wonder how come Japan can reject the responsibility for activities that are approved by the United Nations?

-- Now that North Korea has nuclear weapons in its hands, the U.S. may have to rebuild its expanded deterrence (nuclear umbrella).

Shinn: If I were in the Japanese government's position, I'd rather consider missile defense and collective self-defense. Missile defense is a real defense to provide for the failure of deterrence. Japan's self-imposed prohibition against collective self-defense is the biggest problem in establishing integrated a seamless missile defense (with the U.S.).

-- What do you think about the cuts in Japan's burden sharing of costs for the stationing of U.S. forces in Japan, that is, "omoiyari yosan" (literally "sympathy budget" or host nation support)?

Shinn: Government budget officials are always trying to minimize spending. The Japanese government wants to get perfect security without the U.S. military presence in Japan-and even without paying money, if possible. But that's impossible.

-- The 'fair' price is needed for the alliance, isn't it?

Shinn: Compared to Japan taking on defense on its own, I think Japan's current defense posture is far cheaper. However, it's a mistake to consider security on a balance sheet. We should consider how to maintain territorial integrity and national security. This is far beyond the sympathy budget, and this is a matter of Japan's national security strategy on the whole.

-- The Foreign Ministry wants to reaffirm the significance of bilateral security between Japan and the U.S. in 2010.

Shinn: I think it's beneficial to remind both countries of the greater goals and reasons for maintaining the alliance.

(4) New DPRK missile site to be completed in spring

NIKKEI (Page 6) (Full)
February 5, 2009

Sachiko Deshimaru, Washington

There are signs indicating North Korea is preparing to launch a Taepodong-2 long-range ballistic missile, and the countries concerned are becoming growingly alarmed. Charles Vick, a senior fellow at Global Security, an influential U.S. research institute in the military area, is a missile expert and an analyst of satellite imagery. The Nihon Keizai Shimbun interviewed him on the current state of North Korea's missile development program.

The following is a gist of the interview:

1. North Korea has been modernizing its missile sites. The missile site at Musudanri, which was used to test a Taepodong-2 missile in 2006, is now capable of launching satellites. The new missile site at Tongchangri is for launching both intercontinental ballistic

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missiles (ICBM) and satellites. This site can test missile launches without flying across over Japan or any other neighboring countries (or without threatening these countries directly).

2. To analyze commercial satellite images, the new missile site is still under construction and is expected to be completed in the latter half of March or in April. After that missile site is completed, North Korea may carry out a ballistic missile launch test or a satellite-related test there, I think. A recent image shows that they have moved a rocket launch pad.

The Taepodong-2's overall modernization is under way and it can be called "Taepodong-3." Its range seems to be ultralong. It depends on how much the warhead can be lightened, but its maximum range is

estimated at 14,000-15,000 kilometers, which covers the U.S. mainland's the southeastern part, including Florida.

(5) Government eyes new MSDF dispatch legislation allowing them to shoot at pirate ship without being attacked

ASAHI (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)
February 5, 2009

Hisashi Ishimatsu

The government and ruling parties, in connection with the planned dispatch of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) on an anti-piracy mission in waters off Somalia, intend to enact new legislation that allows for the first time the Self-Defense Force on an overseas mission to use weapons in performing their duties, such as shooting at a pirate ship to bring it to a halt. Their view is that because the MSDF on the anti-piracy mission are to conduct policing operations, the use of weapons would not constitute the use of force, which is prohibited under Article 9 of the Constitution. The gradual expansion of the authority to use weapons is drawing strong criticism.

Policing activities and the government's interpretation

From the idea of sole self-defense, the SDF is allowed to use force only in such cases as striking back after the country comes under armed attack. The war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution stipulates: "(The Japanese people) forever renounce the use of force as a means of settling international disputes."

For this reason, the use of weapons has been heavily restricted even after the country began dispatching the SDF overseas in the 1990s on a UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) mission and the like.

Although the authority to use weapons has gradually been expanded with the enactment of legislation authorizing the SDF's overseas missions, the scope has been basically limited to legitimate self-defense and emergency evacuation. Further, unlike foreign forces, the SDF is not allowed to use weapons in carrying out their duties, such as firing at a truck that has broken through a checkpoint.

The view presented by the government in the discussion on the envisaged anti-piracy legislation is that the MSDF should be allowed to use weapons in performing their duties and that use of weapons against a criminal group does not constitute the use of force. Under Article 20 of the Japan Coast Guard Law, JCG officials are allowed

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to use weapons against a vessel refusing an order to stop or a fleeing vessel in Japanese waters. The government intends to expand this scope to include the high seas and to allow the SDF to use weapons in similar cases under the envisaged new law.

There are two reasons that can explain why the MSDF must be allowed to use weapons in performing their duties on the anti-piracy mission.

The government envisages escorts of Japanese-related vessels by MSDF destroyers. What if a pirate ship approaches one of those vessels escorted by MSDF destroyers or pirates attempt to board a civilian vessel? In such a situation in which a vessel has not yet been attacked by pirates, the commander might find difficult to determine whether the MSDF is allowed to use weapons. The prevailing view among uniformed officers is that the use of weapons should be allowed but the MSDF should still abstain from using weapons to the maximum extent possible.

If the use of weapons is allowed only in legitimate self-defense and emergency evacuation, firing at a fleeing boat would not be permitted. Once weapons are allowed to be used in carrying out duties, the MSDF would be able to conduct warning and surveillance activities to crack down on pirates.

Incorporation of use of weapons in legislation may take on life of

its own

In Japan's postwar history, the SDF has not killed or injured anyone overseas. If the MSDF used weapons and sank a pirate ship or killed or injured pirates in performing their duties, how would the public react to it?

Further, in the event a discussion on a permanent law governing the overseas dispatch of SDF rekindles, the incorporation of the use of weapons in the law alone might take on a life of its own based on policing activities.

In fact, the prevailing view in the LDP is that the MSDF should be allowed to use weapons in performing their duties on par with foreign forces. The Council for Rebuilding the Legal Foundation for National Defense, established by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, recommended in June 2008 that the SDF should be allowed to use weapons for eliminating obstacles blocking (their duties) that are authorized under PKO criteria. The LDP, too, drafted a permanent law in 2006 designed to allow the SDF to use weapons in carrying out international peace activities, including security activities, while specifying the need to relax the weapons-use criteria.

Comment by Teikyo University Professor Toshiyuki Shikata: It is outrageous that the MSDF cannot fire shots unless pirates first attack. SDF troops must be allowed to use weapons when the commander decides that such is necessary to carry out objectives and duties. The MSDF's rule of conduct limiting the use of weapons (to legitimate self-defense and emergency evacuation) would draw derision from the international community.

An international effort is underway to clamp down on piracy in waters off Somalia. Japan, too, should share the risk of using weapons. At a time like this when foreign naval vessels are protecting Japanese commercial ships, it is not acceptable for Japan alone to insist, "We cannot (use weapons in performing our

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duties)."

Japan must determine what it should do and establish a law that can bridge the gap with the constitutional restrictions. Civilian control means for lawmakers to establish a law that does not give the commander a free hand in making a decision.

Comment by Waseda University Professor Asaho Mizushima: In 1991, Masaharu Gotoda, who later became deputy prime minister, opposed dispatching minesweepers to the Persian Gulf, describing the step as a single ant hole. The trend to use the SDF as an international political tool has set in with the dispatch of minesweepers.

Like the dispatch of the minesweepers, the government is trying to dispatch the MSDF to waters off Somalia by stretching the interpretation of the SDF Law that envisages activities in waters near Japan. In principle, the Japan Coast Guard must deal with maritime crimes. It is easygoing to dispatch naval vessels in line with other countries. A matter that is easy to reach an accord is always used as the first pump-priming measure. On this occasion, the government appears to be trying to pave the way for the use of weapons by (the SDF) in performing their duties.

Currently, the SDF is allowed to use weapons to inflict harm only in legitimate self-defense and emergency evacuation. A stretched interpretation of this might be linked to a permanent law (general law) governing the overseas dispatch of the SDF and eventually give a boost to the interpretation of the use of the right to collective self-defense being constitutional.

(6) Interviews with LDP, DPJ leaders: How would you break the political deadlock?

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)
February 4, 2009

LDP's Oshima: Roles of two Diet houses should be clearer

-- Some have contended that one of the reasons for the public's distrust in politics is slow decision-making by politicians.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima: We politicians have to humbly accept public dissatisfaction with gaps in the speed of politics and the economy, amid ongoing globalization. However, politics seeking only efficacy could destroy democracy.

We must learn from history that such arguments often come up under the abnormal situation called war. Democracy needs to go through the procedures that require a good deal of time and effort. Some neo-liberalists asserted that small government is better. But a failure by small government caused the financial crisis in the United States. It is time to think of the roles of markets and politics.

-- The view calling for the one-chamber system is gaining ground in the LDP.

Oshima: Under the single-chamber system, the ruling parties would high-handedly steer Diet business and prime minister that time would not easily dissolve the Diet. Opportunities to ask for the people's vote of confidence would decrease. If so, the public will definitely

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complain about being unable to exercise the right to choose a government in an election. Democracy involves such risk.

We should make efforts to overcome problems under the present bicameral system even under a divided Diet.

-- Specifically?

Oshima: It is necessary to make clearer the supremacy of the House of Representatives as stipulated in the Constitution. The Lower House should often seek the judgment of the people through general elections. A rule to respect the Lower House should be made.

Meanwhile, it is time for the House of Councillors to deal with long-term issues in a consultative capacity. The Upper House is not in a situation to drag out deliberations.

-- The joint committee of both Houses, which is responsible for coordinating views, has not functioned.

Oshima: Differences in views between the two chambers of the Diet could be corrected by joint committee action. But under the present Upper House in which the political tint is strong, what we need are party-to-party consultations.

DPJ secretary general: Political change is only way to break impasse

-- Many say that the political situation has grown stagnant.

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama: The biggest cause is bureaucrat-led politics. The LDP has long entrusted bureaucrats with the drafting of policies. However, bureaucrats can neither respond quickly to unprecedented situations nor arrive at a speedy conclusion.

-- Some contended that the divided Diet can't respond to a crisis.

Hatoyama: I do not take the view that a divided Diet is not good. In the Upper House, the will of the people has been reflected. The Upper House's views should be reflected in the whole of national politics.

The political impasse is a result of the LDP's denial of the popular will in the latest election, being too much concerned about its honor and victory in the election. There is no other way but a change in government that will break the sense of impasse in the political situation.

-- Don't you think the DPJ also should reflect on some of its

conducts?

Hatoyama: My view is that it would be easy for our party to fight if (the ruling camp) turns down our proposals. Because we will lose tools to attack them (if the ruling coalition) accepts. I must admit that I cannot abandon party interests.

-- Do you think the ruling parties have ideas to move forward policy measures?

Hatoyama: If they just stick to their assertions, they eventually will only give priority to the Lower House. This means that the will

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of the people cannot be reflected. Various approaches are necessary to have the joint committee of the both Houses function.

-- Voters are dissatisfied with the DPJ for failing to show the concrete shape of a DPJ-led government.

Hatoyama: The DPJ has to consider what kind of problems will appear after it takes the reins of government. Security issues are practically important. We have intentionally avoided discussions on some issues. In addition to our manifesto (set of campaign pledges), we need to come up with a vision in which we tell people that Japan will change in such and such a way.

(7) 2008 ODA whitepaper: Effort needed to release information on pledges, state of implementation

YOMIURI (Page 13) (Full)
February 4, 2009

By editorial writer Hiroko Kono

The Foreign Ministry presented to the Cabinet yesterday the 2008 white paper on official development assistance (ODA). The paper spotlights climate change and aid to Africa.

In 2007, Japan decreased ODA spending by 31 PERCENT to approximately 7.68 billion dollars or approximately 900 billion yen. Japan now ranks fifth among the donor countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), following the U.S., Germany, France, and Britain. Japan was the world's top donor for 10 consecutive years, starting in 1991, but it tumbled to second place in 2001 and third place in 2006.

In terms of the ratio of ODA to its gross national income (GNI), Japan ranked 20th among 22 major aid donors, undermining its influence in developing countries. That is why the government is urged to reconsider the quality, policy, and modality of its ODA program.

The white paper brings into focus the issues of climate change and African development, following up the Hokkaido Toyako Summit last summer and the 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Yokohama in May. But it fails to fully convey the urgency and importance of these two challenges.

In recent years, Africa has drawn growing interest as it has become difficult to attain the United Nations' millennium development goal of eliminating poverty by the year 2015. The effects of climate change on Africa, such as floods and lack of rain, are becoming serious.

The issues of climate change and Africa took center stage for the first time in the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Gleneagles, Britain, in 2005. The participants promised to boost by 2010 the world's annual ODA outlays by 50 billion dollars over the 2004 level, and to provide Africa with half of the increased portion. This numerical figure was inserted in the leaders' declaration issued at the Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

However, Oxfam, an international non-governmental organization (based in Oxford, England) specializing in aid to developing

countries, estimates that in 2010, the increased portion of the world's ODA spending would be 30 billion dollars short of the G-8 pledged amount. Oxfam also calculates that "ODA disbursements by the DAC countries to Africa totaled 3.9 billion dollars in 2007, and 6 billion dollars more ODA funds will be needed each year."

The white paper neither cites the pledges made by the industrialized countries nor informs the state of implementation of these pledges. It also stops short of referring to the contents of the agreement reached in the G-8 Summit, and its description about Japan's pledges is also hard to understand.

Industrialized countries have promised in G-8 summits and other international conferences to boost ODA outlays, but they have left ambiguous the state of implementation of such promises.

Under this situation, the Japanese government introduced "a process to check public pledges" in a past session of the Conferences on African Development, which the government has held jointly with the UN and the World Bank. The government will hold a minister-level follow-up meeting in Botswana in March. A member of Oxfam Japan said:

"I am paying attention to whether Japan will be able to convey to developing countries and Japanese taxpayers how far the promises have been translated into action. The government should also form a mechanism to follow up the promises made by industrialized countries at such international forums as G-8 summits."

If the efforts being made by Japan are referred to in white papers, it will help people understand ODA more deeply.

The Japanese government, under its "Cool Earth Partnership" initiative, has promised to disburse a total of about 10 billion dollars or about one trillion yen over five years starting in 2008 to help developing countries stem global warming. On this initiative, too, the white paper just notes, citing the case of Indonesia: "Efforts are being made among 60 countries."

The government needs to present goals and clarify the state of progress in their attainment in understandable terms. It is also urged to craft a specific strategy and make efforts to tell domestic and foreign audiences what it is.

(8) Editorial: Japan should place emphasis on ODA

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 5, 2009

While the economies of developing countries are being hit by the global financial crisis, the significance of assistance to those countries has heightened. Japan, too, as a member of the developed world is required to provide support to the undeveloped world.

Japan, the United States and European countries - the aid donors -- are also facing tough economic times. So some may question why we should assist other countries at times like this.

However we should consider the great gaps in poverty levels and infrastructure between developed and developing countries. In addition, the financial crisis is threatening the lives of people in developing countries. Foreign investments in developing countries

have decreased. The prices of resources, which are their main exports, have dropped. The global financial crisis also has had an impact on remittances by migrant workers to their countries.

At the United National General Assembly in 2000, world leaders agreed on eight development goals to be implemented by 2015, including slashing poverty. They are called the Millennium Development Goals. The goals were made by global citizens.

There are improvements in some development goals, but we are worried whether most goals will not be achieved (by 2015). The global financial crisis has made uncertain as to whether the pledges are implemented. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon stressed in the Davos meeting last week that assistance for poor nations should not be forgotten. He made the remark at an appropriate time.

According to Japan's ODA (official development assistance) White Paper released this week, Japan in 2007 dropped to fifth place as aid donor in the world, following the United States, Germany, France and Britain. Japan was the largest aid donor in the 1990s.

Meanwhile, in the government's ODA budget request for fiscal 2009, the ODA budget request in the general account totals 670 billion yen, or a four percent cut from the previous fiscal year, due to the belt-tightening fiscal policy. The 670 billion yen is less than one percent of the whole general account budget.

Now is time for Japan to put an end to the decline in ODA spending in consideration of such factors as aid policy being one of Japan's most important diplomatic tools, and that developing countries' economic distress will directly or indirectly affect the Japanese economy.

Prime Minister Taro Aso pledged in the Davos meeting to provide 17 billion dollars to help Asian countries. His positive aid stance is commendable.

Japan has so far promised to add 10 billion dollars for ODA projects, as well as to increase ODA to Africa to over 2.5 billion dollars in five years. We would like our country to keep its promises to the international community.

(9) IWC chairman proposes plan to approve Japan's coastal whaling: Restriction on capture of minke whales, etc., to be lifted in four areas in return for curtailing research whaling

ASAHI (Page 5) (Full)
February 4, 2009

Shigeo Tosa, London

The taskforce of the International Whaling Commission (IWC, secretariat in Cambridge, Britain) on February 2 released the chairman's proposal that includes approving Japan's coastal whaling in return for curtailing its research whaling, which it is conducting in the Southern Ocean. The proposal says that the IWC will aim at reaching an agreement on this settlement measure over the long term, setting the next five years as the interim period.

The IWC established a taskforce in order to find a breakthrough in discussion, but discussions came to a standstill due to confrontation between such pro-whaling countries as Japan and such

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anti-whaling countries as Australia. The panel held only two meetings last year.

The chairman's proposal this time was drafted based on discussions pursued by the panel. It calls on Japan to make a compromise by trading off coastal whaling for research whaling.

In Japan, catching Baird's beaked whales or long-finned pilot whales, which are not subject to the IWC restriction, has long been practiced in Taiji, Wakayama Prefecture, Abashiri, Hokkaido, Ayukawa, Miyagi Prefecture and Wada, Chiba Prefecture. This type of whaling is categorized as small-size whaling.

The chairman's proposal this time is intended to approve the catching of full-range of whale types, including minke whales, which are on the list of whales subject to the IWC regulation, in those four areas of Japan. This is called coastal whaling.

According to the chairman's proposal, coastal whaling should be carried out in a single day by less than five whaling vessels. The

whales caught should be consumed locally. Although the proposal does not indicate any specific figure for the number of whales that can be caught, the number would be set at a sustainable level by using scientific data. Whaling countries will be obligated to annually report catches to the IWC. Concerning whaling after the fifth year, two plans have been included: (1) placing a complete ban on coastal whaling; and (2) allowing the continuation of coastal whaling for a limited number. Since coastal whaling is not part of research whaling, the Fisheries Agency (FA) takes the IWC chairman's proposal as the first step toward resumption of commercial whaling.

In the meantime, two proposals have been presented concerning Japan's research whaling in the Southern Ocean, which is being criticized by anti-whaling countries and environmental organizations. One is a plan to gradually reduce the number of minke whales that can be caught and eventually to put an end to such whaling in stages. The catching of humpback whales and fin whales will be totally banned.

The other plan is to set an annual framework for the annual number of whales allowed to catch, based on advice by the IWC taskforce and to maintain that framework for the next five years.

The IWC characterizes these two proposals as a working draft for discussion. However, it wants to reach a decision at a plenary meeting to be held in Portugal in June at the latest.

FA takes IWC chairman's proposals favorably

FA is basically taking the IWC chairman's proposal, which incorporates approval of coastal whaling, favorably. One official of the Far Seas Fisheries Division of FA said that since talks on whaling are at a stalemate, it is commendable that the working draft for consideration includes coastal whaling.

Two proposals have been made for research whaling in the Southern Ocean. FA's plan is to catch approximately 900 whales a year (excluding 50 humpback whales, whose capture is under suspension). It is now informally calculating the number of whales that can be reduced, while maintaining profitability. A related source said, "We are assuming that the IWC will sooner or later enter into specific discussion on whale catches to be reduced."

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A decision was reached last year to draft an agreement plan that reflects the wishes of various member nations by the annual plenary session of IWC to be held in June this year. It is deemed that such a decision itself indicates that Japan is ready to make concessions to some extent.

The chairman's proposal will likely become the first step for pro-whaling countries and anti-whaling countries to come to a compromise. However, whether they can reach a final agreement is unclear.

Australia, a country that is opposing whaling most strongly, is calling for ending research whaling. The chairman's proposal includes a plan to abolish research whaling.

Agriculture Minister Ishiba was quick to oppose that proposal, saying, "Japan cannot accept a proposal that will make it impossible for it to continue research whaling."

Can figures that satisfy both Japan and anti-whaling countries, such as Australia, be worked out? One government source pointed out, "Chances are high that no figures will be set by June, delaying a settlement."

(10) Masaharu Kono appointed as ambassador to Russia, Yasuo Saito as ambassador to France

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
February 5, 2009

The government informally decided to appoint Masaharu Kono, former

deputy foreign minister, as ambassador to Russia. Kono is now temporarily being posted to the Foreign Ministry's Secretariat. Incumbent Ambassador to Yasuo Saito will be named ambassador to France. Their appointments will be formally decided in a cabinet meeting this month. Kono as Japanese sherpa (personal representative of Fukuda) supported then Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda at the Group of Eight Hokkaido-Toyako Summit last July.

Ambassador to Russia Masaharu Kono: Graduated from the law faculty of University of Tokyo in 1973; served as deputy foreign minister; born in Hiroshima Prefecture; age 60.

Ambassador to France Yasuo Saito: Left the University of Tokyo's law faculty in mid-course; served as ambassador to Russia; born in Okayama Prefecture; age 61.

(11) Government urged to revise law to tighten restrictions on child pornography

SANKEI (Page 11) (Excerpts)
February 5, 2009

By Akira Sakuta, criminal psychologist and guest professor at Seigakuin University

Sharply increasing vicious crimes against children

Criminal activities against children have occurred in succession. According to the National Police Agency, the number of reported criminal offenses against children under 13, which was on the

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decline since 2002, surged by 1,501 cases in 2007.

Although there are not many cases of children are kidnapped or killed, such an evil crime shocks those who have children of their own and generates calls for preventive measures.

This shows that people are more interested in ensuring the safety of children, given the nation's declining birthrate, and this is a global common trend, I think.

Of criminal cases involving children, there are many crimes committed by the victims' relatives or persons close to them. Mental or physical sexual abuse against children will inevitably affect their future lives seriously even though the offenses are not reported to the authorities. According to David Jones, a criminal psychologist, sexual-abuse victims tend to feel uneasy, be seized with fear, show such symptoms as overeating, or find it difficult to go to school or concentrate their attention.

Some victims show signs of refusing to go out, have guilt feelings, become short-tempered, or feel depressed. There are also children who behave badly, tell lies, commit theft, or become aggressive toward friends.

Regarding victims in the adolescent period, drugs might come into their lives. Some might commit suicide or run away from home.

According to criteria for diagnosis by the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-UV-TR), pederosis is categorized as a kind of paraphilia. In many sexual molestation cases, crimes are committed based on pederosis, so pedophiles are the most dangerous type among sexual deviants.

There were sexual activities driven by pederosis from long ago, so it is not true to say that crimes committed by pedophiles have sharply increased recently. Sexual abuse against children under 13 only recently has been recognized as a crime and being severely punished.

In protecting children from such crimes, careful measures of self-defense are necessary. It is also important to impose tighter restrictions on child pornography. Revising the relevant law is necessary to criminalize even the individual possession of child pornography. The government is urged to restrict media that could

increase or excite pedophiles, including anime and comics.

(Corrected copy): Poll: Koizumi ranks top for premiership

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged)
February 5, 2009

In a recent face-to-face nationwide public opinion survey conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, respondents were asked to pick the one lawmaker in the Diet most "appropriate" to be prime minister. In this popularity poll, former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi ranked at the top with 14.4 PERCENT, followed by Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) President Ozawa at 13.7 PERCENT, and Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Masuzoe at 7.5 PERCENT. Prime Minister Aso was at 4.7 PERCENT, slightly higher than former Administrative Reform Minister Yoshimi Watanabe, who drew public attention with his secession from the Liberal Democratic Party.

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Among LDP lawmakers, LDP Deputy Secretary General Nobuteru Ishihara, who ran in the LDP's presidential race in September last year, was at 2.7 PERCENT, with former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike at 1.5 PERCENT, and Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Kaoru Yosano at 1.4 PERCENT. Even among LDP supporters, Aso was at 13 PERCENT, with Koizumi at 25 PERCENT. Among DPJ lawmakers, DPJ Deputy President Kan was at 3.1 PERCENT, ranking next to Ozawa. DPJ Secretary General Hatoyama was at 2.4 PERCENT, and DPJ Vice President Seiji Maehara at 1.9 PERCENT. Among DPJ supporters, 40 PERCENT picked Ozawa, with only 9 PERCENT choosing Kan. Among those with no particular party affiliation, Koizumi topped all others at 13 PERCENT, with Ozawa and Masuzoe respectively at 8 PERCENT and Aso at only 2 PERCENT.

Popularity ranking for prime minister

1. Junichiro Koizumi 14.4 PERCENT
2. Ichiro Ozawa 13.7
3. Yoichi Masuzoe 7.5
4. Taro Aso 4.7
5. Yoshimi Watanabe 4.6
6. Naoto Kan 3.1
7. Nobuteru Ishihara 2.7
8. Yukio Hatoyama 2.4
9. Seiji Maehara 1.9
10. Katsuya Okada 1.7
11. Yuriko Koike 1.5
12. Kaoru Yosano 1.4
13. Sadakazu Tanigaki 1.2
14. Shinzo Abe 1.0
Others 3.9
None 30.2
Can't say 4.3
(Total percentage not 100 PERCENT due to rounding.)

ZUMWALT